

A
CATECHETICAL
TREATISE
ON THE
Patriarchal, Jewish, & Christian
SABBATH;
WITH A VIEW TO ENFORCE,
FROM SCRIPTURE AUTHORITY,
THE MORE CAREFUL OBSERVANCE OF
THE
LORD'S DAY.

By THOMAS WEMYSS,
AUTHOR OF BIBLICAL GLEANINGS, &c.

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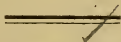
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PREFACE.

THAT the Lord's day has, for many years past, been most openly and wilfully profaned, has been long no less a matter of notoriety than a subject of lamentation among all serious persons.—But this is not all. It has of late unhappily become a matter of doubt with Christian men themselves, whether the observance of the first day of the week be obligatory on them, or can be proved to be so from Scripture. To the infidel violaters of Divine institutions, it would be, for most part, in vain to address any rea-

sonings on the subject of their irreligious conduct. But we have some ground to hope, that those who profess faith in Revelation, and an adherence to the dictates of the Spirit of God, will be disposed to listen to arguments drawn from Scripture, in behalf of the devout observance of one day in seven, as a day of abstraction from the world, and especial consecration to God. To such persons the following remarks are respectfully submitted.

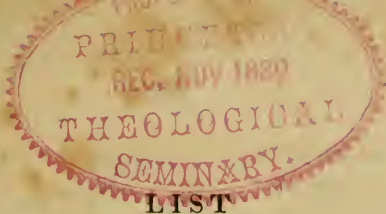
Many object to the observance of the Lord's Day, merely to colour their weariness of it. Men in general seem to be tired of the just and holy ways of God, and of that exactness in walking according to his institutions, which it will be one day known that he requires. The way to put a stop to this declension, is, not to

accommodate the laws of God to the corrupt courses of men. The truths of God, and the holiness of his precepts, must be pleaded and defended, though men dislike them here, and perish hereafter.

On a subject so often handled, it would be unreasonable to look for novelty. Indeed novelty in religion must be nearly allied to error; since the most certain and valuable truths, whether of a doctrinal or practical nature, are also the most ancient.

If, in the course of perusal, several repetitions should appear, let it be understood, that they are rather designed than accidental; some things requiring to be repeated and impressed upon the mind, in proportion both to their importance, and to our unwillingness to retain them.

If the expressions of other authors should be discovered here and there without acknowledgment, the reason is, their language was equally or more perspicuous than any the Author could have used; and it is always of less consequence *who wrote*, than *what is written*. The writer once thought of giving a list of authors who have published Treatises on the institution of the Sabbaths; but, on reflection, he thought it better to present his readers with a list of Scripture passages referring to that subject; it being desirable that our faith “should stand, not in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.”



OF
SCRIPTURE PASSAGES,

Which have more or less reference to a Day of
Rest.

S A B B A T H.

Exod. xvi. 23, 25, 29.	Neh. ix. 14.
xx. 10.	x. 31.
xxxix. 14, 15, 16.	xiii. 15, 16, 18, 19,
xxxv. 2.	21.
Levit. xvi. 31.	Isaiah lvi. 2, 6.
xxiii. 3, 11, 15, 16,	lviii. 13.
24, 32, 39.	lxvi. 23.
xxiv. 8.	Ezek. xlv. 1.
xxv. 2, 4, 6.	Amos viii. 5.
Num. xxviii. 10.	
2 Kings iv. 23.	
xi. 5, 7.	
xvi. 18.	Mat. xxviii. 1.
1 Chr. ix. 32.	Mark ii. 27, 28.
2 Chr. xxiii. 8.	xvi. 1.
xxxvi. 21.	Luke vi. 1, 5.

Luke xiii. 10, 15.

xxiii. 54.

John v. 18.

Acts xiii. 42.

Acts xvi. 13.

xviii. 4.

Heb. iv. 9. See the

Greek.

SABBATH DAY.

Exod. xvi. 26.

xx. 8, 10, 11.

xxxi. 15.

xxxv. 3.

Num. xv. 32.

xxviii. 9.

Deut. v. 12, 15.

Neh. x. 31.

xiii. 15, 17, 19, 22.

Jerem. xvii. 21, 22.

Ezek. xlvi. 4.

Mat. xxiv. 20.

Mark ii. 23, 24.

iii. 2.

vi. 2.

Luke vi. 7.

iv. 16.

xiii. 16.

xiv. 1, 5.

xxiii. 56.

John v. 10, 16.

vii. 22.

ix. 14.

xix. 31.

Acts xiii. 14, 27, 44.

xv. 21.

Mat. xii. 1, 8, 11.

SABBATH DAYS.

Mat. xii. 5, 10, 12.	Luke vi. 2, 9.
Mark iii. 4.	Acts xvii. 2.
Luke iv. 31.	Colos. ii. 16.

SABBATHS.

Exod. xxxi. 13.	Isaiah i. 13.
Lev. xix. 3, 30.	lvi. 4.
xxvi. 2, 34, 35, 43.	Lam. i. 7.
xxiii. 15, 38,	ii. 6.
xxv. 8.	Ezek. xx. 12, 13, 16, 24.
1 Chron. xxiii. 31.	xxii. 8, 26.
2 Chron. ii. 4.	xxiii. 38.
viii. 13.	xliv. 24.
xxxi. 3.	xlvi. 17.
xxxvi. 21.	xlvi. 3.
Nehem. x. 33.	Hosea ii. 11.

SEVENTH DAY.

Gen. ii. 2, 3.	Exod. xx. 11.
Exod. xii. 15, 16.	xxiv. 16.
xiii. 6.	xxxi. 17.
xvi. 26, 27, 29.	xxxiv. 21.

Exod. xxxv. 2.

Josh. vi. 4, 15.

Lev. xxiii. 3, 8.

Judges xiv. 15, 17.

Num. xxviii. 15.

Deut. xvi. 8.

Heb. iv. 4.

FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK.

Mat. xxviii. 1.

John xx. 1, 19, 26.

Mark. xvi. 2, 9.

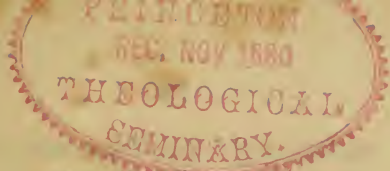
Acts xx. 7.

Luke xxiv. 1.

1 Cor. xvi. 2.

THE LORD'S DAY.

Rev. i. 10.



On the Sabbath.

THE PATRIARCHAL SABBATH.

Q. WHICH is the earliest intimation in Scripture respecting the Sabbath ?

A. In the second chapter of the book of Genesis.

Q. What is there said on the subject ?

A. That on the *seventh* day God ceased from his work of creation ; and blessed the seventh day and sanctified it.

Q. What is meant by *sanctified* it ?

A. He *set it apart for holy purposes* ; for such is the meaning of the word

sanctified in the Old Testament, when applied to inanimate things, or to persons with relation to any office or function.

Q. If the day was thus set apart for holy purposes, by whom was it first observed ?

A. By man, in his state of primeval purity.

Q. Had man at that time need of a day of rest from labour ?

A. Apparently not so much so as at an after period, when the earth had received the curse, which caused man “to eat bread in the sweat of his brow.”

Q. If a day was appointed for man in his state of innocence, whereon to obtain a sacred rest ; is such a day less necessary to be set apart now by *fallen* man ?

A. Our minds must certainly more require such a season for religious cultivation now, than before they became distracted by corrupt affections.

Q. Was not the original institution of the Sabbath intended to commemorate the work of creation ?

A. It was.

Q. Does not the stupendous work of redemption also deserve to be commemorated ?

A. It surely does, and that with the same solemnity, and for the same length of time ; namely, by devoting *an entire day* to the commemoration.

Q. Is not Adam, in this original state, considered as the representative of his posterity, and acting for them ?

A. He is so considered by most interpreters of Scripture.

Q. Does not a general command, given to him as such, continue in force for ever, unless abrogated by the same authority by which it is enacted?

A. It is reasonable to conclude so.

Q. Does any abrogation of this command occur afterwards in Scripture?

A. None can be discovered.

Q. Is it probable that man *in innocence* should be required to devote a seventh part of his time to particular exercises of religion, and yet that we should be left to follow our own ways, on a day originally so set apart?

A. It is highly improbable.

Q. Does not the Sabbath, then, appear to have been instituted when mankind stood the least in need of that institution?

A. It certainly appears so.

Q. If the Sabbath began nearly with the world itself, is it not probable that it has some affinity to the world's existence, and the ends of it, and therefore must be commensurate with its duration?

A. It is no unnatural supposition.

Q. Do not some, however, say, that in Gen. ii. 2. the Sabbath is spoken of by way of prolepsis or anticipation.

A. They do so; but very absurdly. It would be a strange and unusual prolepsis to say, "That God rested on the seventh day from all his works of creation, that is, the next day after finishing these works, wherefore, 2400 *years after*, God blessed and sanctified the seventh day; not that seventh day whereon he rested, with those that succeeded in the like revolution of time;

but *a seventh day* that happened so long after, which was not blessed nor sanctified before.

Q. Is not this reasoning about *apropos* contradicted in the New Testament, Heb. iv. 3, 4. ?

A. It is. The Apostle, having occasion to mention *different rests*, begins with naming that in Genesis, chap. ii. ; and shews, that it could not be that to which David, in Psalm xcv. alluded ; because that rest began *from the foundation of the world*. This the Apostle has no concern with ; for he is not treating of a rest of *God*, but a rest such as men, by faith and obedience, might *enter* into. Such was that in the land of Canaan ; and that now proposed to them in the promise of the gospel.

Q. Are there no other traces of the Sabbath during the patriarchal times?

A. None but what are obscure. It is rather remarkable that Noah observed the *Septenary* revolution of days, in sending forth the dove out of the ark, as twice noted in Genesis, chap. viii. That this was done *casually* is not to be imagined. Might not Noah send out the dove the next day after the Sabbath, to see, as it were, whether God had returned again to rest in the works of his hands? In Gen. xxix. 27. a week is spoken of as a known account of time; “fulfil her week,” i. e. of days in the festival of his marriage with Leah; for the celebration of a marriage-feast lasted seven days, as we learn from Judg. xiv. 12, 15, 17.

Q. Is it not possible, or rather like-

ly, that the moral law, though not *officially* and *formally* promulgated, as on Sinai, was before that period made known to men in all its requisitions; and, if so, the Sabbath was enjoined among the rest?

A. The only objection to this supposition is the silence of Scripture on the subject; a silence which seems scarcely sufficient to ground an objection on, when we consider the necessity of the case, namely, that men should have some such moral code published to them.

Q. But if the law of the Sabbath was given from the beginning, to mankind in general, that is, to the Gentiles, and not to the Jews only, how happens it that God, who blames the Jews, never blames the Gentiles for their violation of it?

A. God himself says by Paul, “ that he suffered the Gentiles to walk in their own ways, and winked at their ignorance.” Besides, they were not in covenant with God, as the Jews were. And farther, having corrupted themselves in worshipping false deities, it was not to be expected they should retain the observance which belonged to the worship of the true God. It may as well be asked, why the Gentiles are not blamed for the breach of others of the ten commandments.

Q. We find that Nehemiah, when anxious to preserve the Sabbath from profanation, reprov'd the *Jews*, who traffick'd on it; but not the *men of Tyre*. Why was this ?

A. The plain reason is, that Nehemiah was at that time governor of the

Jews, and had a right to enjoin things on *them*, according to God's appointment; whereas, he had no jurisdiction over the Tyrians, nor any intercourse with them, except according to the law of nations. The one, therefore, he charges with *moral evil*; the other he simply threatens for disturbing his government.

THE JEWISH SABBATH.

Q. DOES the command to sanctify the Sabbath form any part of the moral law?

A. Yes—The fourth commandment enforces the duty of observing this first institution of God to man.

Q. Is there nothing said respecting the Sabbath from the first mention of it in Genesis, till the promulgation of the law on Sinai?

A. Nothing—Except what is set down in Exodus, chap. xvi. verses 23—30; where it is evidently mentioned not as a *new* institution, but as one with which they were acquainted.

Q. Is the silence of Scripture in other respects any argument against the knowledge and observance of the Sabbath, during the times of the patriarchs?

A. No, by no means—an argument drawn from this silence would prove too much, since many things must have existed during this period; of which, notwithstanding, no mention is made, the sacred historian having something more important in view.

Q. What does the fourth commandment require?

A. It requires abstinence from those labours and employments on the seventh day, which it is a duty to pursue on the other six days with diligence.

Q. Does it require any thing further?

A. It commands us to use our endeavours, that this day be sanctified by

all over whom we have authority or influence. We are not, therefore, to permit the works of our ordinary worldly occupation to be carried on *by others on our behalf*.

Q. Does any account of the duties of the Sabbath, occur in the writings of the prophets?

A. Yes—Isaiah in his 58th chapter has given a very ample account, both of the duties of the day, and of the temper of mind with which they are to be performed.

Q. What is the substance of the prophet's expostulation?

A. He arranges the command under three heads. *1st*, We are not to do our own ways, that is to attend to our worldly business, or ordinary secular pursuits. *2d*, We are not to find our

own pleasure on the Sabbath, that is, it is not to be a day of merriment, of sports and pastimes, or of mere amusement. It is to be a day of rest from bodily labour; but not a season of mere animal recreation. *3d*, We are forbidden to speak our own words; that is, the conversation ought to be suited to the sacred offices of the day. As we are prohibited from pursuing our ordinary labours, so are we prohibited from making them the subjects of our discourse. We ought to confine our conversation to religious or moral subjects; to the instruction of our dependents, or to edifying communication with our equals.

Q. Do you observe any thing else in the prophet's language?

A. He points out what ought to be the temper of our minds in these holy

exercises. Far from being weary of the spiritual employments of the Sabbath, we ought to account them our pleasure, and call the Sabbath *a delight*.

Q. Was not the violation of the Sabbath a capital offence among the Jews?

A. Yes—Inasmuch as the Jews lived under a theocracy; and this, with other moral precepts, was incorporated into their civil laws. See Exodus, xxxi. 14.

Q. Does the same penalty then remain in force against Christians?

A. It cannot be supposed—for this being a part of the covenant of peculiarity, vanished with its abolition. As the promises of that covenant were chiefly of a *temporal* nature, so also were its punishments.

Q. But is there not a degree of strictness in the observance of the Jewish

Sabbath, which can never be transferred to the observance of the Christian rest, or be binding on Christians? I refer especially to the kindling of a fire on the Sabbath day, which was prohibited to the Jews. See Exodus xxxv. 3.

A. If this were a fire for common comfort or convenience, one would be apt to think it a hard law, in a country where the inhabitants said “who is able to abide his frosts?” But, whoever compares the context will find, that it relates only to fires made for the *purposes of labour*. He who vindicated his disciples, when blamed for plucking corn to satisfy hunger, would scarcely forbid the use of fire, for the necessary preparation of food. We may conclude, therefore, that the kindling of a

fire for the refreshment of the body, was not contrary to the Jewish law.

Q. Is there any thing then in the duties of the Sabbath, as subsisting under the Jewish dispensation, contrary to a rational and spiritual service?

A. It is not easy to discover any thing ; for the making the breach of it a capital offence, was a circumstance belonging to the *policy*, rather than to the *religion* of the Jews.

Q. What do you take to be the general character of the decalogue?

A. Considered in itself, it is absolutely *moral*, and universally and perpetually binding ; though as given to the Israelites, it seems to have had a *political* use, as having a place in the economy of the covenant which that church was brought under.

Q. But are not some of the precepts

different from others, not merely in meaning, but in form and character, as applicable to that dispensation ?

A. The *first, fourth, and fifth* have prefaces, enlargements, or additions, which belonged more particularly to the state of the Jewish Church at that time, and afterwards. But these special applications of them change not their *moral* nature.

Q. Is the fourth commandment on a footing with the others in all respects ?

A. Yes—*1st*, It was spoken *immediately* by the voice of God, and not afterwards through the medium of Moses, as the laws merely *ceremonial* were.

2d, It was written twice by the finger of God in tables of stone—an emblem of the spiritual writing of his law in the hearts of his people.

3d, Like the rest, it was reserved in the ark ; whereas the law of *ordinances* was placed in a book written by Moses on the *side* of the ark, from whence it might be removed.

4th, God himself separates the fourth commandment from those which were merely *ceremonial*, when he calls the system of precepts contained in the two tables, by the name of the *ten* words or commandments. See Deut. x. 4.

5th, The Sabbath is never ranked with mere ceremonies in the Old Testament, when there is any opposition made between *moral obedience*, and observance of *ordinances*. In Isaiah i. 13. where the Sabbath is joined with new moons, it plainly refers to the *annual* feasts or Sabbaths, not to the *seventh-day* rest.

6th, The observation of the Sabbath is

pressed on the Jewish church on the same grounds, and with the same promises, as the greatest and most indispensable *moral duties*. See Isaiah lviii. 6, 14.

Q. Was not the Sabbath of a typical nature, like other ceremonial institutions? That the same thing should be both typical and moral seems a contradiction.

A. That the *rest of God* after the work of creation, has a something correspondent with it in the *rest of the Son of God*, after laying the foundation of the new heavens and earth in his resurrection, cannot be denied. That the one was *intended* to be typical of the other seems to be no where affirmed, and cannot be proved. But even admitting it had something typical in its nature,

why should this hinder it from being a *moral duty*? Was there nothing moral in the nature of *sacrifices*? or rather can any service be performed to God, or by his command, that has not something *moral* in it, though it may be ceremonial in form? Besides, the original law of the Sabbath was given *before the fall*, during the state of innocence, and hence could have no respect to a system of things that had then no existence.

Q. Is it not said in Ezekiel xx. 10. &c. that God gave the Jews his Sabbath in the wilderness, to be a sign between him and them. And in Nehem. ix. 14. that he made known unto them his holy Sabbath?

A. It is so said—and it is no uncommon nor implausible opinion, that *gave* here means *restored*, i. e. restored the

knowledge of the Sabbath among them, the memory of which they had almost lost. But not to insist on this, let it be observed, that the language is not he gave his Sabbath absolutely, or for the *first time to mankind at large*; but restrictively, he gave his Sabbaths to the *Jews*, as a separate people, a people in covenant with God, for *a sign* between him and them. Or, as it is elsewhere expressed, (Exod. xxxi. 13.) “that ye may know that I am the Lord that doth sanctify you.”

Q. Does it not appear from the examples of a Patriarchal, a Jewish, and a Christian Sabbath, that a Sabbath or holy rest is a constituent part of, or belongs to, every covenant betwixt God and man?

A. Yes—with this condition or limi-

tation, that the change of the covenant (or dispensation), introduces some change in the rest annexed to it.

Q. Do not the Jews abstain from preparing meats on the Sabbath.

A. They do.

Q. On what is their practice founded?

A. On a mistaken view of Exod. xvi. 23. Whereas the words there have respect merely to the *manna* that was to be preserved, and not to ordinary meats.

Q. Are they not scrupulous also about *motions* or *removals* on the Sabbath?

A. They are, and for a similar reason, that is, from an erroneous application of verse 29th in the same chapter, though the injunction refers solely to their going into the fields to look for manna on that day; which was both su-

perfluous and improper, God having given them a double portion the day before, and none on that day.

Q. Are not the expressions in Exodus xxxi. 13, &c. respecting the Sabbath, significant of something peculiar to Judaism?

A. Yes—it is called *a sign* (as before mentioned), and it was so in several respects. 1. *On the part of the people*, since their assembling on that day, and worshipping him as the true God, was a sign or express acknowledgment that they were the Lord's people. 2. *On the part of God*, that it was he that *sanctified* them; for by this observance they had a visible pledge that God had *separated* them to himself, and had given them his word and ordinances. Farther, it is said to be observed by the

Jews in their generations, i. e. as a church-state, or peculiar people; therefore, when this church-state was dissolved, by the intervention of providence, at the destruction of Jerusalem, or by the introduction of the gospel dispensation prior to that event, the Jewish Sabbath might be said to be virtually and truly abrogated, and a new Sabbatical rest enjoined. Again, it is said to be appointed *for ever*, i. e. in the same sense in which the Jewish covenant is called *perpetual* or *everlasting*, viz. because it was to be *so to them*, since God would never make any other peculiar covenant with them *as a nation*.

Q. Is there not a particular restriction respecting the Sabbath in Exodus xxxiv. 21. ?

A. There is—It is said, “in earing

time, and in *harvest*, thou shalt rest.”²³ Earing time and harvest are the seasons in which husbandmen are most intent on their operations, and with difficulty bear any interruption, because it may be greatly to their damage. Not that this should be interpreted rigorously, at least if one may judge from our Lord’s conduct, so that had the product of their fields been in danger from the elements, one would think they might lawfully have endeavoured to save their property on that day.

Q. Are there any other matters observable in Scripture respecting the Jewish Sabbath?

A. One may notice several things—such as, that any young clean beast that was to be offered in sacrifice, must continue *seven* days with the dam, and

not be offered until the *eighth*, Levit. xxii. 27. That a child was not to be circumcised until the *eighth* day, that (as the Jews say) there might be an interposition of a Sabbath for their benediction. And it is not unlikely that the *eighth* day was also signalized hereby, as that which was to succeed in the room of the seventh, in a dispensation then future.

Q. Were the Jews scrupulous about warfare on the Sabbath?

A. Very much so. It appears from history that they suffered much on many occasions, by not daring to fight on that day. In the time of the Maccabees, a great slaughter was made of them on the Sabbath, because they thought it unlawful to defend themselves. On which they passed a decree, that for the time to come, if they were attacked on

that day, they would not suffer themselves to be destroyed. They agreed in future to fight on that day, at least so far as to defend their lives.

Q. How comes it to pass that the Jews, before the Babylonish captivity, were so prone to idolatry, and so averse from it afterwards ?

A. This was probably the reason—before the captivity they had few, if any synagogues for public worship, for want of which they grew ignorant, and were easily seduced into idolatry ; but after their return from captivity, synagogues were erected in every city, to which they constantly resorted on the *Sabbath-days* for public worship, and where they had the Scriptures read and expounded to them. By this method they acqui-

red and retained a knowledge of their religion.

Q. Was the Sabbath distinguished by any additional sacrifice?

A. Yes; by the additional sacrifice of two lambs, besides the daily burnt offering. Num. xxviii. 9.

Q. Is any of the Psalms considered peculiar to the Sabbath?

A. The 92d Psalm is entitled, "A Psalm or Song for the Sabbath day," and was probably composed, in order to be sung in the temple-service of that day.

Q. Whither did the Jews of old times resort on the Sabbath?

A. In early times, as we learn from 2. Kings iv. 23. it appears to have been customary with the Jews to resort to their prophets on the Sabbath day, and also on the new moons, and then, not

improbably, the prophets and other persons learned in their law, were used to explain it to the people.

Q. Do we find any thing in the New Testament equivalent to an injunction on the Gentile Christians, who were not previously accustomed to any day of rest, to observe the Jewish Sabbath?

A. Nothing of the kind; but it is plain, from the instance of those at Troas, Acts xx. 6, 7. that Gentile Christians were accustomed from the beginning to observe *the Lord's day*.

THE CHRISTIAN SABBATH.

Q. DID not the command to appropriate one day in seven to the worship of God, and to religious exercises, become void when the Jewish law ceased to be in force ?

A. No ; the command to sanctify the Sabbath is a branch of the *moral law*, as summed up in the ten commandments ; and that law being confessedly, with respect to *nine* of them, of *universal* and *perpetual* obligation, there is no reason for supposing that the sanctification of one day in seven, was a

mere peculiarity of the Jewish code, but rather, like its fellow precepts, binding on men at large, in every age of the world.

Q. But is there not something ceremonial in this commandment more than in the other *nine*?

A. All that is ceremonial in it is, the appointment of a *particular day*; in other respects, it is a moral precept, enjoining the appropriation of a *seventh part of our time*, to the special service of Him who is Lord of all our time. We may as well contend, that the fifth commandment, "to honour our parents," has something ceremonial in it because it is the first and the only commandment with a *promise* annexed to it, and that a *temporal* promise too; quite in the spirit of the Jewish dispensation.

Yet, who will say that this precept was abrogated with the rest of the Mosaic institutions?

Q. Did our Lord declare it to be his intention to abrogate any part of the moral law?

A. Quite otherwise; in his sermon on the Mount, he assures us that he came, not to subvert or abrogate, but to ratify.

Q. But was it the *moral* law he was here speaking of?

A. Undoubtedly; since immediately after, he proceeds to expound the sixth, seventh, and third commandments, as parts of the law of which he was discoursing—denounces a curse on those who should set it aside, Mat. v. 19. and points out its spiritual nature and extent.

Q. But is not the appointment of the *first* day of the week, for the public religious exercises of Christians, a tacit abrogation of the fourth commandment, which appoints the *seventh* day for the celebration of the Sabbath ?

A. It is obvious that the change is merely circumstantial, and does not interfere with the essence of the command.

Q. Is it no interference to *change the day* ?

A. Though the last day of the week was undoubtedly appropriated by the fourth commandment, it is remarkable, that the words may be applied to *any day* in the seven. The words are, “remember the *Sabbath day*, (not the *seventh*), to keep it holy ; and the Lord blessed the *Sabbath day*, (not the *seventh*), and sanctified it.” We are

enjoined to pursue our ordinary labours during *six* days, and on every seventh day to rest. This injunction is fulfilled, whatever day of the seven be the day of rest. Though it was on the seventh day that God ceased from creating, our regards are not diverted from a due consideration of God's love in creating us, by the alteration of the *day* appropriated to the Sabbath; though we are thereby directed to the celebration of a blessing superior to that of creation.

Q. Is there any other instance in Scripture of the *motive* for observing the Sabbath being changed, without any change in the commandment itself?

A. Yes; in Deut. v. 15. Israel's being a servant in the land of Israel is mentioned as the reason for observing a Sabbatical rest.

Q. Those who sail round the world by the east, gain a day ; and those who sail the contrary way, lose one—will not such, therefore, come to observe a different Sabbath ?

A. This is a trifling question ; the main consideration in the law of the Sabbath is not that the observance of it should begin and end all over the world *at the same instant* ; but that men should devote a seventh portion of their time to the remembrance of God's rest, and the other ends for which the Sabbath was appointed.

Q. If it could be proved, that the apostles, and not their Master, fixed on the first day of the week, whereon to observe the Christian Sabbath, would it make any material difference in the general argument ?

A. None at all ; since it is not to be imagined that the apostles would fix on *any* day, without immediate direction from the Lord Christ.

Q. Do not some affirm, that the continuance of a weekly Sabbatical rest, and the particular appointment of the first day of the week, arose among the first Christians, not from any command of God, but from a voluntary agreement in the churches, for the sake of order and decorum ?

A. This is a strange affirmation, if any do make it ; since every careful reader of Scripture will soon discover, that whatever the primitive churches might do for the sake of good order, they durst not, and did not, interfere with divine institutions. Besides, where

is the record and proof of such agreement?—

Q Is there any evidence of an interval elapsing between the first churches desisting from the observance of the seventh day, and attending to the observance of the first day?

A. No such thing appears; let them produce it that can.

Q. Do not some say, that the *morality* of the fourth commandment, consists in this, “that we should look after, and take up our spiritual rest in God?”

A. They do so, but without warrant; for this is no distinct or peculiar morality of the *fourth* commandment, but rather belongs to the whole decalogue; and if any commandment is to be singled out as having this meaning, it is rather the *first* than the fourth.

Q. On what foundation, then, may we place the observance of the Lord's day?

A. On the following:

1st, There is a *new* work of *creation* undertaken and completed. See Isaiah lxv. 17—66. xxii. 23. Rev. xxi. 1. Rom. viii. 19, 20. 2 Cor. v. 17. Galat. vi. 15.

2d, This new creation is accompanied with a *new law*, and a *new covenant*. Rom. iii. 27. viii. 2, 3, 4. Jerem. xxxi. 32, &c. Heb. viii. 8, &c.

3d, To this law and covenant, a *day of holy rest* to the Lord belongs, which cannot be the same day with the former, any more than it is the same law.

4th, This day was limited to the *first day of the week*, by our Lord Jesus Christ.

Q. Why should the *first day* of the week be selected for the observance of the Christian Sabbath?

A. Because, 1st, On this day Christ *rested from his works*, by his resurrection from the dead, after having laid the foundation of the new heavens and new earth.

2d, On this *same day* he first appeared to his disciples, in proof of his resurrection.

3d, On the *same day*, a week after, and *not in the interval*, he shewed himself to the incredulous apostle Thomas.

4th, On the first day of the week, our Lord sent the Holy Ghost, with his miraculous gifts, upon the apostles. They were then assembled, *with one accord*, in the observance of the day signalized by his resurrection, as one

may justly suppose; and their obedience in this respect received a blessed confirmation, as well as their persons a glorious endowment.

5th, The practice of the apostles, and apostolic churches, owned the authority of Christ in the observance of this day, as appears from Acts xx. 6, 7.

6th, The time for collecting a common stock, for the relief of the Christian poor, is expressly limited to the *first day* of the week, 1 Cor. xvi. 2.

7th, John, in the book which closes the canon of Scripture, calls it the *Lord's day*; not surprising the churches with a *new name*, but denoting the time of his visions by the name of a day well known to them. And John would not have ventured to call it so, had not the day owed its observation to *the Lord's*

institution and authority. It is called the Lord's day, in the same manner as the ordinance commemorative of Christ's death is called *the Lord's Supper*, and we know that Christ instituted *that*.

8th, There is no appearance, in the history of primitive Christianity, of any other day having been observed among the followers of Jesus, as a day of religious rest.

Q. But did not the apostles go frequently into the Jewish synagogues on the seventh day ?

A. There is no doubt they did ; and their reason for so doing is evident :—their ministry, for a time, had a peculiar regard to the Jews, for the conversion of the remnant among them ; and they therefore seized the opportunity of *their* assemblies, that they might

preach to the greater numbers of them, and that at a time when they were prepared to attend to sacred things. But we nowhere read, that they assembled the disciples of Christ on that day for the worship of God.

Q. If then, no one denies, or well can deny, that the apostles and primitive Christians held their meetings steadily on the first day of the week, must we not consider the keeping of this day a matter of divine institution ?

A. Our doing so is unavoidable ; for neither our Lord nor his apostles would countenance the observance of *human inventions*. Their *practice* and *patronage* clearly implies the *precept*, and explains the *law*, as to this matter.

Q. Does not its being called the

Lord's day denote some peculiarity in it?

A. Its being called the Lord's day, shews, that the Lord Jesus claims a special property in it, and hath set it apart for himself, to be spent by his disciples, in his service, and for keeping up the remembrance of his memorable work. Whenever we find the Lord claiming any thing in a peculiar manner as *his own*, from among a number of things of the same kind, it imports his setting it apart from a common to a holy and religious purpose; and to put such hallowed things to a common use, is to profane them, to disobey the Lord, and rob him of his due. When God separated Israel, he tells them, "all the earth is mine;" but to them he says, "Ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto

me, above all people." Exod. xix. 5. Hence they are called the *Lord's people* in distinction from all others. So all the days of the week are in a sense the Lord's days; but this is called *the Lord's day* in a peculiar sense, and as distinguished from all the other six, even as the seventh day was called the *Sabbath of the Lord*, in distinction from the other six in which they were to labour, Exod. xx. 10. It is called the *Lord's day*, (as mentioned above), in the same sense as the breaking of bread is called the *Lord's Supper*. And if this would be profaned by using it as a common meal, so the Lord's day must be, when any part of it is spent in our *common worldly* employments.

Q. Have we any proof in Scripture,

that the first disciples observed the *whole* of the Lord's day ?

A. That they met on the *evening* of that day, appears pretty plain from John xx. 19. John xx. 26. Acts xx. 7, 8. 1 Cor. xi. 20.;—that they met on the *morning* of that day also, is evident from the memorable account in Acts, chap. ii. where we find that, on the day of Pentecost, the 120 disciples were *all* with *one accord*, in *one place*, and that before the *third hour* of the *day*, or nine o'clock in the morning. That Pentecost fell on the first day of the week that year, has been often proved. This was no *partial* meeting—they were *all* there; it was no *accidental* or *occasional* meeting—they were there with *one accord*, or with unanimous consent; so that it was a fixed, concerted, meeting.

That the disciples, by this time, were instructed in the reasons for observing that day, is more than probable.

Q. But perhaps the disciples were *every day* engaged in such exercises?

A. No doubt they were, for some time; but not to the disparagement or neglect of the first day of the week; at least we have no instance of it.

Q. Probably they assembled merely to observe the Jewish worship?

A. That they went to the temple at the hour of prayer, both to perform their devotions, and to have an opportunity of preaching to the people, is granted; but when do we find them assembled *as a church*, on the *Lord's day*, to perform *Jewish worship* in the temple?

Q. But how could they employ the *whole* of the first day of the week?

A. They were enjoined to observe a variety of institutions, or branches of worship, as we may learn from Acts ii. 42. which must occupy a great part of the day, unless they are very formally and superficially observed.

Q. What does the apostle Paul say on the subject of the Sabbath, in his epistle to the Colossians?

A. He warns the Colossian Christians not to be seduced by those who would compel them to be circumcised, and to keep the law. He afterwards says, “ Let no man, therefore, judge you in meat or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moons, or of the sabbath days, which are a shadow of things to come, but the bo-

dy is of Christ." From which we learn, that a Christian was not to be censured, if he observed no distinction in meat or drink, no new moons, no Jewish feasts and Sabbaths, and the like. That these were ceremonial ordinances against us, and contrary to us, which Christ abolished.

ON THE
CONDUCT OF JESUS,

In respect to the Sabbath.

Q. DID Jesus, while on earth, make any alterations in the law of the Sabbath?

A. None appear in the sacred records.

Q. When he taught that acts of mercy were suitable to the Sabbath, did he introduce any *new* doctrine?

A. None. He appealed to the Jews, whether it was lawful, or not, “to heal

on the Sabbath day;" and they held their peace. Their silence was acquiescence, Luke xiv. 3.

Q. Did our Lord consider as violations of the Sabbath, those proper duties which are indispensable, and which the Sabbath itself requires?

A. On the contrary, he appealed to the law of Moses on this head, Matth. xii. 5.

Q. Does our Lord teach, that a due care of the brute creation on the Sabbath, is consonant to the law of God?

A. Yes; he reproves some whose seemed to insinuate the contrary, Luke xiii. 15. and indeed the terms of the fourth commandment respecting *cattle*, imply a regard to the comfort of animals, and their repose on that day.

Q. But did not our Lord violate the Sabbath, and shew his contempt for it, when he commanded the man at the pool of Bethesda, *to take up his bed* and walk, since God had commanded the people to bear no burden on the Sabbath day? John v. 8. Jerem. xvii. 21.

A. This could not be; our Lord understood the law too well, and regarded it too highly, to violate it wantonly. And those who consult with care the following Scriptures, will find, that the *prohibited burdens* were such as related to the carrying on trade or ordinary labour. See Jer. xvii. 24. Neh. xiii. 15. A spirit of humanity, and a desire to shew the completeness of the cure, prompted our Lord, most probably, to give the man this order.

Q. Does not Jesus affirm that he is Lord of the Sabbath? Mark ii. 28.

A. He does ; and perhaps when he affirmed this, he alluded to a future change in the day of the week, to take place in consequence of his private injunctions to his apostles.

Q. Do you not rather think, that by declaring himself Lord of the Sabbath, he pointed at its abolition by his authority ?

A. By no means ; the argument would not be of a piece were this to be admitted. Our Lord had said, “ the Sabbath was made for man,” i. e. for man’s benefit ; and this interpretation would make him say, “ I, as Lord of the Sabbath, by speedily abolishing that institution, am going to deprive you of this benefit.” The words of

our Lord must then have another import, namely, to point indirectly to the regulation of the day of observance, so as to direct the attention of his disciples to the greatest of all mercies, the completion of his labours for their eternal redemption.

Q. What does our Lord mean when he says, “ pray that your flight be not on the Sabbath day ?” Mat. xxiv. 20.

A. He evidently declares the continued obligation of the law of the Sabbath, as a moral precept upon all. Some indeed, affirm, that it is the *Jewish Sabbath* alone that is intended; but this cannot be; for, 1st, All obligation to Jewish institutions was taken away at that period our Lord alluded to. 2^d, His disciples were sufficiently instructed *doctrinally* in the dissolution of all obli-

gation to ceremonial institutions. *3d*, Even the Jews, at that time, counted themselves absolved from the law of the Sabbath, on occasion of imminent danger, so that they might either *fight* or *fly*, as appears from the decree made by them under the Asmonaeans. Others say, that our Lord had respect, not to the *consciencess* of his disciples, but to their *trouble*; and therefore, joins the Sabbath day and the winter together, directing them to pray for an *ease* and accomodation in that flight which was inevitable. For, as the winter is unseasonable for such an occasion, so the law concerning the Sabbath was such, that if any one travelled on that day, further than a commonly allowed Sabbath day's journey, he was to be put to death. But there is no foundation

for this pretence, for *1st*, The power of capital punishments was, by this time, taken from the Jews. *2d*, The times alluded to by our Lord were the times of warfare and rapine, when the national law could not be enforced. It is, therefore, most probable, that our Lord speaks to his disciples, upon a supposition of the perpetual obligation of the law of the Sabbath, that they should pray to be delivered from the necessity of a flight on the day whereon the duties of it were to be observed, lest falling out otherwise it should prove a great aggravation of their distress.

Q. When the Jews find fault with the disciples, respecting the plucking ears of corn on the Sabbath, what does our Lord say ?

A. His arguments are these : *1st*. He

points them to the case of David, who ate the *shew-bread*. If his hunger excused the breach of one ritual law, the hunger of his disciples might excuse the breach of another. *2d*, The priests, in offering up *daily* sacrifices profane the Sabbath; therefore, the prohibition of working on that day admits of exceptions. *3d*, His presence, as Lord of the Sabbath, and engaged in a divine mission, authorised and privileged his disciples in what they did. *4th*, God prefers mercy to sacrifice. *5th*, The Sabbath was a merciful institution, for man's benefit, and not a burden.

Q. What does our Lord mean when he says, “ my Father worketh hitherto, and I work ?” John v. 17.

A. He means to say, “ you have a wrong notion of the Sabbatic law. You

read that God rested on the seventh day ; he rests indeed from his work of the visible creation, but in the government or preservation of the things which he has made he worketh hitherto, and will ever work, doing good to his creatures at all times. In these instances, and in imitation of him, I also work continually, doing acts of mercy on the Sabbath day, as well as on other days."

Q. Wherein then, lay the main dispute between our Lord and the Jews?

A. The dispute between them was, whether it were lawful to do works of mercy and necessity on that day, which they denied, and he affirmed and proved.

Uses of the Day of Rest.

1. As it is necessary, in the first foundation of religion, that we know distinctly *whom* we are to worship, and in *what manner*, so it is likewise necessary that some *portion of time* be allowed for instructing ourselves in the knowledge of our duty; and for the practice peculiarly of that special part of it, which consists in the *public acknowledgement and solemn worship* of God. This serves as an antidote to atheism.

2. The Sabbath was originally instituted, that men might continually commemorate the works of creation, and

acknowledge the *one true God*, the *Author of all things*; and might praise him perpetually for the things that he has made. Gen. ii. 3. Rev. iv. 11. This serves as an antidote to polytheism, and to planet worship. Deut iv. 19. Job xxxi. 26. This reason for observing the Sabbath, from its very nature, is of eternal and unchangeable obligation.

3. A reason of the institution *peculiar to the Jews* was, that they might commemorate their deliverance out of the land of Egypt; which, *to that people*, was, as it were, a *new creation*. Deut. v. 15. and the despising of the Sabbath of which any Jew was guilty, was a manifest contempt of that great deliverance, therefore highly aggravated. Hence, perhaps, the capital punishment inflicted

on the man who gathered sticks on the Sabbath day. Num. xv. 35.

4. Another reason of the Sabbath being instituted was, that *servants and cattle* might have a time of *rest*. See the fourth commandment, and Exod. xxiii. 12. So far as this was a memorial of their bondage in Egypt, it was *peculiar to the Jews*, and of a *ritual* nature. But so far as it is founded in *general humanity*, it is of perpetual obligation.

5. So far as the Sabbath contains any thing merely *ritual*, that may be viewed as abolished by the Gospel ; but instead of the Jewish Sabbath, and its peculiarities, there is now instituted, by the appointment and practice of the apostles, (no doubt authorised by our Lord himself), the observance of the

first day of the week, called the *Lord's day*.

6. Its use now is, in addition to what is already mentioned, to commemorate the glorious resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and to celebrate the great events connected with it, as well as the beneficial results flowing from it to mankind.

7. Weak and frail creatures, such as we are, liable to strong temptations, apt to be engrossed by the cares of this life, and to forget the concerns of a better, *need to be reminded* of those things from which we turn away our thoughts, to be excited to our respective duties, and to be continually exhorted, lest we be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.

8. No duty is more frequently inculcated in the Gospel than benevolence and brotherly love. Now, there is nothing which seems more proper to promote and preserve union and friendship among Christians, than the associating together for the public worship of God at stated times.

On the Name of the Day of Rest.

Q. WHAT is the most ancient name of the day of rest ?

A. The seventh day, Gen. ii. 3.

Q. What are its more modern names ?

A. The Sabbath, the first day of the week, the Lord's day, Sunday.

Q. Is the name of importance ?

A. No farther than for distinction's sake.

Q. What is the reason why some refuse to employ the term " Sunday ?"

A. Because it is of heathen origin.

Q. Did the ancient Christians use that name?

A. Justin Martyr and others do, particularly in reasoning with the heathen of their time, to whom any other name would probably have been unintelligible.

Q. Is there any thing in Scripture that seems to forbid the use of such names?

A. Yes; in Exod. xxiii. 13. and Josh. xxiii. 7. and elsewhere, the Jews were forbid to mention the *names* of the *false gods*.

Q. On the other hand, is there any apology now for those who use such terms?

A. There is this, that the origin of these names is now unknown, except to the learned; and therefore the multi-

tude use them, without knowing or adverting to their idolatrous derivation.

Q. But does not the use of them serve to perpetuate the remembrance of these false gods ?

A. If there were no other means of perpetuating it, this might be alleged ; but, so long as the ancient Greek and Roman writers are read and studied, and so long as the Scandinavian mythology is at all attended to, as furnishing materials for romantic poetry, these names will be familiar to the minds of civilized men. Nor does the retention of the *name* serve to perpetuate the *system*.

Q. What may be accounted the best name for the day of rest ?

A. *The Lord's day* ; because it is a Scripture name, and because it reminds

us of the day *being his* ; otherwise, the title of “ Christian Sabbath ” seems neither unsuitable nor unscriptural, inasmuch as the general notion of a Sabbathical rest is still included in the observance of it.

TRACES

OF THE

*Manner in which the Christian Sabbath
was observed in early times.*

Q. How did the primitive Christians observe the day of rest ?

A. We learn from Justin Martyr, that they met together every Sunday ; at which time portions of Scripture from the Old and New Testament were read, and discourses were made to exhort them to piety ; then they joined in prayer, afterwards they partook of the

holy communion, and lastly, they made collections for the poor.

Q. Did the Christians act thus in peaceable times only, or also in times of persecution?

A. They were so persuaded that this was an indispensable duty, that they observed the Lord's day, not only in peaceable times, when they were permitted to make open profession of their faith, but in times of persecution, and at the hazard of their lives. The cruelty of princes and magistrates could not make them neglect it; for we find, by their writings, that they used to come together before break of day, and in small companies, and different places, when they could not meet openly, and in great numbers.

Q. To what authority do you refer, in confirmation of this account of their meetings?

A. To the celebrated letter of Pliny to Trajan, Epist. lib. x. 97. where that author says, “They, i.e. the Christians, affirmed, the whole of their guilt or their error was, *that they met on a certain stated day*, before it was light, and addressed themselves in a form of prayer to Christ as to some god,” &c. These meetings were rather *before light* than *during night*; and therefore, by equitable construction, did not violate the Roman laws against nocturnal assemblies. Nor, indeed, was it possible for poor labouring people to sit up whole nights at their religious assemblies, and to follow their several occupations in the day time.

Q. Can you mention any other references to this day in the writings of the early Christians?

A. Those that follow may be noted, not as authorities on this subject, for the Scriptures only are our authority in things sacred, but as evidences of the fact :

A. D. 50. *Barnabas*, “ We keep the eight day with gladness.”

A. D. 105. *Ignatius*, “ We observe the Lord’s day.”

A. D. 105. *Ignatius* says again, “ Let us no longer sabbatize, but keep the Lord’s day, on which our life arose.”

A. D. 110. *Pliny*, already quoted, says, “ The Christians met on an appointed day, to sing praises to Christ as to a god, and to bind themselves by a sacrament.”

A. D. 155. The words of *Justin Martyr*, already alluded to, are, “ On the day that is called Sunday, all, both of the city and country, assemble together, where we preach and pray, and discharge all the other usual parts of divine worship.”

A. D. 172. *Dionysius*, bishop of Corinth, says, “ To-day, being the Lord’s day, we keep it holy. On it we have read your epistle, as also the first epistle of Clemens.”

A. D. 200. *Tertullian* styles the parts of public worship, “ the Lord’s day’s solemnities.”

A. D. 200. *Tertullian* says, “ On Sunday we give ourselves to joy.”

A. D. 204. *Clemens Alexandrinus* calls it “ the chief of days—our rest indeed.”

A. D. 230. *Minucius Felix* mentions the Christians as assembling to eat on a solemn day.

A. D. 230. *Origen* advises to pray to God, “especially on the Lord’s day, which is a commemoration of Christ’s passion ; for the resurrection of Christ is not only celebrated once a-year, but every seven days.”

A. D. 253. *Aurelius*, a reader in the church, is described by Cyprian as reading on the Lord’s day.

A. D. 290. *Victorinus* represents this day, as an usual time wherein they received the Lord’s Supper.

Q. Were the Christian’s equally strict in the time of the emperor Constantine ?

A. No ; a law was then enacted, that judges, artisans, and others, should rest on Sunday ; but that husbandmen were

at full liberty to work, since it frequently happened that the weather was unsuitable for agricultural operations on another day, and the bounty of Providence should not be thus left at hazard.

Q. Was this law ever repealed?

A. Yes, and a stricter one published by the emperor Leo ; but none of these are of authority sufficient to regulate our practice.

*On the Mode of observing the Lord's
Day.*

Q. WILL you favour me with your sentiments on this part of the subject ?

A. This is perhaps the most important part of the subject, and therefore requires a distinct consideration.

Some viewing the first day of the week, as a day to be observed in a manner wholly Judaical, have prescribed a very rigorous observance of it ; others have collected whatever they could think of, that is “ lovely and of good report ” in the practice of religion,

and enjoined the whole as necessary to the right sanctification of the Christian Sabbath. It has been the mistake of both parties, that they have been more anxious to *multiply duties*, and give them out by *tale* or *number*, than to direct the mind, or inward man, to a due performance of the duties of the day, according to the *spirit* and *genius* of *gospel obedience*.

As to the *time* to be allotted to the day of *sacred rest*, it ought surely to be equivalent to the time allotted to a day of *worldly labour*; and this is perhaps the best and most reasonable method of measuring it. Besides, Christ rose in the *morning* of the first day of the week, and appeared to his disciples in the *evening*. This seems sufficiently to fix the interval. Let us beware either of

Jewish scrupulosity in this matter, or of irreligious licentiousness.

The duties of the day are to be performed, according as our natural strength will enable us. As in the old law, he that could not offer a *bullock* might offer a *dove*, so here there is an allowance for the natural temperaments and conditions of men. God requires and accepts according to what we have, and not according to what we have not. No one is bound by the prescription of his neighbour, but by his own strength conscientiously estimated.

The *frame of mind* of those who observe the day, must be suitable to the nature of the gospel dispensation. Being freed from the bondage of the law, we are to serve God with a spirit of *peace*, *liberty*, *delight*, and *joy*. Those who

thus serve God, and seek for communion with him in his worship, are a better rule to themselves in regard to words and actions on that day, than those are who reckon over all they say or do, in a manner more becoming a Jewish sabbath than the Christian rest.

Men should bring right principles to the observance of the day, such as,

1. Remember, we have had *a week* for our own purposes, and now God demands *a day* for his. And thus we own his sovereignty over all our time.

2. Remember it is a day of spiritual and holy rest, reminding us that we should seek for rest in God *here*, and eternal enjoyment of him *hereafter*.

3. Remember, that we lost our original rest in God, by transgression; of

which rest the original seventh-day Sabbath in paradise was a pledge.

4. Remember, that the rest we now seek after, is a rest procured for us by Jesus Christ, into which we can only enter by faith and obedience; and that much of the employment of the day consists in admiring the recovery of a rest, by the grace of God, manifested through his Son.

5. Remember, that in the right observance of this day, we subject our consciences to the authority of Jesus Christ, as the one mediator between God and man.

6. Remember, that this weekly rest of Christians, in the worship and contemplation of God, according to the gospel, is a pledge of the more glorious

rest, and more perfect worship to be enjoyed, when time shall have an end.

In order to more complete abstraction from worldly anxieties and business, and a more solemn and reverential observance of the Sabbath, it would be at least prudent to set apart some short time in the way of *preparation* for it; both on account of the greatness and holiness of God, with whom we have more especially to do in attending to the duties of the day; and also, on account of our being so liable to distraction and entanglement from worldly concerns. We all know how much secular employments, let them be ever so lawful, fill and occupy the mind of those who are ordinarily engaged in them; and that the mind needs to be *simplified*, as it were, and purified of

earthly projects and dependencies. This suggestion about preparing for the Sabbath, is not intended as a matter bound on the conscience of any, but rather as a matter of prudence, and as auxiliary to the main end of the Sabbath, viz. spiritual edification, and devout waiting upon God.

Let the day be partly employed in *meditation*, 1st, On God—2d, On the privileges of the day itself, and the ends of its observance. Let it be also employed in *supplication*. 1. For grace from God to bless the day to our use and enjoyment. 2. For a removal of such evils, hindrances, and temptations, as might prevent our benefiting by its observance. Let the day be also employed in *instruction*. “I know Abraham, (says God, Gen. xviii. 19.) that

he will command his children, and his household after him ; and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment," &c. This is incumbent on *fathers* with respect to their offspring ; *masters* with respect to their servants ; *teachers* with respect to their pupils ; and in general on all superiors, who have others under their care or charge.

The duties of the day may be divided into *public and private*. With respect to both, the following rules may be observed :

1. That the public worship of God is to be preferred to that which is private. With prudent management, they need never interfere or entrench on each other ; but when they do, the private must give place to the public.

2. Choice is to be made of those assemblies for the celebration of public worship, where we may be spiritually most advantaged.

3. The manner of our attendance should be with reverence, gravity, order, diligence, attention.

4. No particular duty should be drawn out to such a length as to beget weariness and satiety. Better too short than too long. Better that some be scantily fed, than any overburdened. Remember Senecas' saying of an orator, "we were afraid that he would end."

5. Refreshments useful to nature should not be forborne. Abstinence on that day, farther than it serves a spiritual purpose, is Judaical, and not called for. Only let our refreshments

be *seasonable, moderate*, and attended with no unnecessary *waste of time*.

6. Labour or travel, for advantage to others, in the public worship of God, is no way prohibited. The gospel sets no bounds to a Sabbath day's journey, provided it be *for Sabbath day purposes*.

7. Labour in works of charity and sympathy to the poor and sick, is allowed by all to be lawful, though too little attended to.

8. As for sports and recreations on that day, there can be no doubt in a serious mind, not only of their inutility, but of their absolute unseasonableness and unsuitableness. The same may be affirmed of all music, except that which any where accompanies the worship of God.

9. The domestic or personal perusal

of the Scriptures, forms a valuable part of the private employments of the day. As to the study of mere human writings on that day, it is *rather* difficult to decide. Perhaps only the *Book of God*, is suited strictly to the *day of God*. It is obvious, at any rate, to remark, that those uninspired productions, which are nearest in subject and manner to the Sacred Writings, are the most appropriate study on the sacred day, if any latitude be allowed in this matter.

Q. Should not cattle be allowed to rest on the Lord's day?

A. Certainly. Therefore, all Sunday travelling on horseback or in vehicles, where cattle are employed is unlawful, and contrary to the fourth commandment.

Q. Is a spirit of levity allowable on the Lord's day?

A. By no means. One important use of a weekly rest, is serious and profitable reflection, in order to the religious and moral culture of the mind; it must, therefore be wrong, as evidently interfering with the design of the institution, to give way to levity, or to noisy and riotous mirth. Otherwise, a cheerful rather than an austere manner of spending the day, is favourable to its proper use.

Q. Will you particularize what may or may not be done on the Lord's day, in addition to what is already mentioned?

A. It is very difficult to be particular on such a subject, nor is it altogether necessary. A well instructed conscience will readily point out both. Not only

our secular callings, mere scientific studies, bodily diversions and exercises, seem forbidden, but feasts and revels of every kind are plainly unbecoming, and unlawful.

As to what *may be* done, the language of a heathen, (Scævola) when consulted what was lawful to be done on holidays, seems appropriate enough, “whatever being omitted would prove injurious.” Whatever cannot be done before that day, or after it, without great risk and danger. If instances must be given, let those furnished by Sir Matthew Hale, suffice, viz. the stopping of a breach in a sea wall, propping up a fallen edifice, pulling out an ox or other animal fallen into a pit or ditch, setting a broken bone, administering medicine

in imminent diseases, milking of cows, feeding of cattle, and the like.

Q. Are any cautions necessary respecting works of necessity ?

A. 1. That is not a work of necessity, which by a little prudent and conscientious management, might have been *foreseen*, and provided for before the Sabbath.

2. That is no work of necessity which may be delayed till next day, without material loss or injury. Men often make necessities to serve their own case, and sloth, and fancy, and dislike to the Sabbath. If we were more faithful to God, many of our necessities would vanish into mere imaginations.

3. Those works of humanity and charity, which are better performed on that day than deferred till another, may

be lawfully done ; but not so as needlessly to rob us of our time for the other important purposes of the Sabbath.

Q. Can you give any other directions respecting the proper observance of the day ?

A. The following hints may be useful: Early rising on the Sabbath morning, and private devotional exercises then performed, will conduce much to spiritual advantage through the day. After returning from public worship, it is advisable to retire into a private apartment, and there to note down either the substance of what we heard, or the nature of those impressions and suggestions which arose in our minds during divine service. Let Sunday meals be moderate rather than full. Beware of idle visitors, who might en-

gage one in vain and unsuitable conversation. See that the other members of the family are properly employed, especially the younger ones.

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS.

IF men should once take the keeping of the Sabbath into their own hands, and deny that they are bound to observe the first day of the week, the consequence would be, they would find themselves at no small loss what to fix upon, or wherein to acquiesce in this matter. It must either be left to every individual to act as seems good to him, or the decision of it must be committed to others, to the church or to the civil magistrate. Hence there would be as many determinations about it as there

are distinct ecclesiastical or political rulers. And, according to the prevalence of superstition or profaneness in the minds of those who had the power of determining the time of worship, so would the arrangement of it be.

We have an instance of this confusion in the case of holydays, which each church and sect appoints and observes, according to pleasure; the church of Rome observing many; the church of England not a few; the dissenters, a very small number, if any, and the Quakers none at all.

Duties which men are left at liberty to discharge *at what time they please*, soon come to be utterly neglected. Of all those great numbers who cannot be prevailed on to worship their Creator upon the *solemn day* set apart for that

purpose, there are few who find it more convenient to do it *on any other*.

Negligence of the Lord's day is generally owing to some little call of business or pleasure, or perhaps to mere indolence, and not to the great respect we have for any *superior duties*. Such pretend, that God will have *mercy* rather than *sacrifice*, but *they* give him *neither*.

Because it is difficult to specify the *particular duties of individuals* on the Lord's day, just as it is to say what *sum* of money *each* man should give in charity, we are not therefore left at liberty to act as we may think fit, or rather as we may fancy. Even if the Scriptures were silent—if there were no traces of this custom in the practice of the Apostles, who gave *all* their time to

religion, and continued *daily*, with one accord, in the temple; one might almost add, were there no revealed religion upon earth, this day is now, by so many reasons, by so long a prescription, for such important purposes, appropriated and consecrated to God, that it were a sacrilege to profane it.

Though the places of public worship, on a Lord's day, contain some *hypocritical* persons, many *thoughtless* people, no small number of *lukewarm* christians, and in general, too many wicked persons, of every class, who join no devotion to their prayers, and no holiness to their devotion, yet *the good are all there*.

We should be careful not to overvalue our observance of the Lord's day; when we have done all, we are unprofitable servants. Much more should

we beware of that foolish and illusive imagination, that a decent and regular attendance on public worship, will atone for habitual offences, and indulged sins ; and that if we give a seventh part of our time to God, we may give the other six to folly and iniquity.

Unhappily, both the poor and rich are often endangered by having one day every week entirely at their own disposal, but the poor especially are so. Thus every good institution is liable to abuse ; and how frequently does the Lord of the Sabbath, by a kind of audible providence, interpose to punish on the spot the profanation of his own day. He would do a service to Christian society who would collect the instances of this. How often is it the case, that men brought to the most de-

plorable end, and become an awful spectacle for the benefit of others, have been heard to acknowledge immediately before their exit, that their first engagements in iniquity were contracted during their *leisure* on the *Lord's day*; and thus they were brought to perdition, by the very means which God had mercifully appointed for their salvation.

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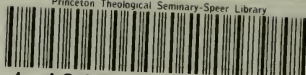
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